



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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KATHRYN BARGER

SUPERVISOR, FIFTH DISTRICT
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

May 22, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

This is to express the grave concerns that many of us have in Los Angeles County due to the prolonged economic closure and its profound impact on the health and welfare of our citizens and working families. As our Governor, I believe you share many of those concerns and am urging you to assist the County of Los Angeles in advancing in Stage 2, and transitioning from Stage 2 to Stage 3 of California's COVID-19 pandemic roadmap by June 12, 2020. This action would enable us to reopen and allow: dine-in restaurants, in-store retail, malls and shopping centers, schools and child care facilities, personal care businesses (salons and gyms), movie theaters, and in-person religious services. In seeking your support, I note the following:

- Los Angeles County has taken measures over the past 60 days to ensure adequate hospital capacity and medical treatment to meet the needs of its citizens. Accordingly, the average rate of hospitalization in the County has declined 1.6% per day over the last week, while testing capacity this week exceeds 1.6 per 1,000 residents per day. The County's positive test rate has also dropped to 9%, down 5 percentage points in the last few weeks. Many of these criteria meet or exceed your stated thresholds and surpass the rates of other large urban California counties. Los Angeles County also has been proactive in outlining plans for reopening and preparing our healthcare system for potential surges.
- On April 24, the Board of Supervisors established the Economic Resiliency Task Force, including experts and leaders broadly representing healthcare, labor, large and small business, education, infrastructure, entertainment, and other industries. Since the shutdown in March, many of these industry leaders have begun developing plans to reopen our economy; with their leadership, we are prepared to get Los Angeles County moving again—safely—while reasonably protecting the most vulnerable populations from COVID-19.

- We believe the sustained shutdown will lead to even more deaths and sustained damage to the citizens of Los Angeles County. Numerous studies, including one specifically issued by the Kaiser Family Foundation, have concluded that there is greater danger in remaining closed due to increased poverty, depression, drug-abuse, social unrest, and mental illness. Economic projections paint an additionally dire picture. There have already been more than one million unemployment claims filed in Los Angeles County since mid-March. Furthermore, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation predicts that more than 750,000 jobs will be lost from the retail and food-service industries alone, and that 75% of the total jobs lost will be those earning \$50,000 or less.
- Finally, the data reveals that the risk in reopening is lower than originally thought. Analyzing the data in Los Angeles County, we have learned the following:
 - There have been 0 deaths among those under the age of 18, out of a population of more than 2 million;
 - There have been 52 deaths among those under the age of 40, out of a population of 6.5 million, representing less than 1 death per 100,000; and
 - There have been 450 deaths among those under the age of 65, out of a population of 8.75 million, representing less than 5 deaths per 100,000.

I deeply appreciate your shared interest and commitment to the people of Los Angeles County and the State of California. Given your background in business and public policy coupled with your political leadership, I have great confidence in your appreciation of the inextricable link between the health and safety of our residents to our economy. Urgent and timely action is therefore required in Los Angeles County, including movement in Stage 2 and into Stage 3 on California's COVID-19 pandemic roadmap. We can and will do this safely and I look forward to your support.

Sincerely,



KATHRYN BARGER
Supervisor, Fifth District
Chair, Board of Supervisors

